

upon which he had entered with such zest some years before, was bound to end in failure. The terrible malady which attacked him in 310 would tend to confirm his forebodings. Like Antiochus Epi-phanus, Herod the Great, and Herod Agrippa, Galerius became, before death released him from his agony, a putrescent and loathsome spectacle. His physicians could do nothing for him. Imploring deputations were sent to beg the aid of Apollo and ^Esculapius. Apollo prescribed a remedy, but the application only left the patient worse, and Lactan-

tius
quote
s with
power
ful
effect
the
lines
from
Virgil
which
descri
be
Laoco
on in
the
toils
of the
ser-
pents,
raisin
g
horro
r-
strick
en
cries
to
Heave
n, like
some
woun
ded
bull
as it
flies
bello
wing
from
the
altar.
Was it
when
broke
n by a
year's
const
ant
an-
guish
that
Galeri
us
exclai
med

that he would restore the temple of God and make amends for his sin? Was he, as Lactantius says, " compelled to confess GOD " ? Whether that be so or not, here is the remarkable edict which the shattered Emperor found strength to dictate. It deserves to be given in full:

"Among the measures which we have constantly taken for the well-being and advantage of the State, we had wished to regulate everything according to the ancient laws and public discipline of the Romans, and especially to provide that the Christians, who had abandoned the religion of their ancestors, should return to a better frame of mind.

" For, from whatever reason, these Christians were the victims of such wilfulness and folly that they not only refused to follow the ancient customs, which very likely